

Eleven Delaware sites awarded grants for urban agriculture and community garden projects

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WILMINGTON – Eleven Delaware urban farm and community garden projects are receiving support to grow and thrive through a new initiative designed to strengthen communities and improve nutrition, Governor Jack Markell announced today.

“Urban agriculture and community gardens are an amazing way to strengthen neighborhoods and improve the quality of life,” Gov. Markell said. “Over the last several years we’ve seen a tremendous growth in the community garden movement across Delaware and I’m pleased that our support is helping these neighborhood treasures impact even more families with fresh, nutritious food, connect kids with nature, and enrich the lives of the next generation.”

This year’s pilot initiative awarded \$10,000 in micro-grants from the Delaware Department of Agriculture to community groups, religious institutions, schools and other organizations. Governor Markell’s budget proposal would double that funding for the upcoming fiscal year.

Governor Markell made the announcement at Kingswood Community Center in Wilmington, one of the 11 grant recipients. Kingswood has had a small garden for its clients for several years, and the grant funding will help it expand and add more raised beds.

“This support is incredibly helpful in our efforts to connect our families and children with fresh food and the art of gardening,” said Logan Herring, executive director of the Kingswood Community Center. “It’s wonderful to see the

children digging in the dirt, pulling weeds, and planting, and even better to see their faces when their work produces fresh, delicious produce to enjoy.”

Under the Markell Administration, grassroots initiatives have led to the growth of more than 70 community gardens or urban farms throughout the state, primarily in New Castle County and Wilmington, growing from only a handful eight years ago.

The Delaware Department of Agriculture, which has provided technical and other assistance, launched the micro-grants as another way to support these communities, said Secretary of Agriculture Ed Kee, who praised other partners including the Delaware Urban Farm and Food Coalition, the Delaware Center for Horticulture, and Delaware Cooperative Extension.

“From overgrown lots to school lawns, our neighborhoods have risen to the challenge and planted gardens or started small urban farms,” Kee said. “The support that these diverse efforts have received is phenomenal, and these micro-grants are a way to continue that support in years to come. A small amount of funding can go a long way for a neighborhood looking to build raised beds or purchase plants and seeds.”

This year’s recipients include:

- > Kingswood Community Center, Wilmington, \$1,000
- > Downtown Visions, Market Street Community Garden, Wilmington, \$1,000
- > Lutheran Community Services Community Food Pantry, Wilmington, \$1,000
- > Wilmington Friends School, \$1,000
- > Absalom Jones Senior Center, Wilmington, \$1,000
- > Elsmere Garden Society Community Garden, \$500
- > St. Nicholas’ Episcopal Church Parish Garden, Newark, \$1,000
- > Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids at Pleasantville Elementary School, New Castle, \$960
- > Kent Community Garden Collaborative, \$590

- > W. Reily Brown Elementary, Dover, \$1,000
- > Kent County 4-H Afterschool Program, \$950

The next application round will open in the fall. More information will be available at de.gov/urbanag.

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